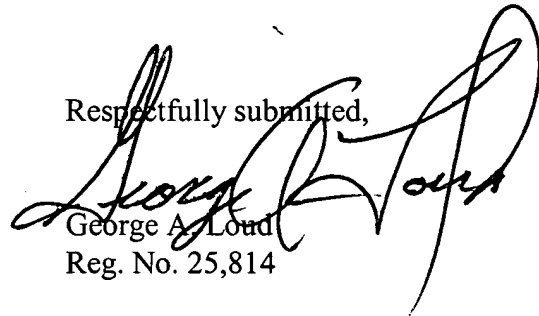


REMARKS

A Substitute Specification and Abstract is submitted herewith to place the case in better English form. The Substitute Specification and Abstract contains no new matter. In order that the examiner can satisfy himself in this regard, also submitted herewith is a marked-up copy of the original Specification and Abstract from which the Substitute Specification and Abstract was typed.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "George A. Loud", is written over the typed name and registration number.

George A. Loud
Reg. No. 25,814

Dated: June 23, 2004

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DESCRIPTION

DT09 Rec'd PCT/PTO 23 JUN 2004

ELECTRONIC TICKETS AND COUPONS

SYSTEM AND METHOD FOR PROVIDING RIGHT INFORMATION, AND

~~COMPUTER PROGRAM FOR ACHIEVING SAME~~

→ CROSS Reference to Related Applications

TECHNICAL FIELD

The present invention relates to a system for providing an electronic ticket or an electronic coupon to a consumer, and ^{to} a computer program therefore.

BACKGROUND ART

In recent years, electronic tickets have been used ^{as} ~~which are~~ admission tickets in electronic form for ^s a concert, ^{s and} a movie, or the like. Also, electronic coupons have been used ~~which are coupons~~ in electronic form ^{electronic} ~~usable~~ in various stores. Such ~~electric~~ tickets ^{and} ~~or electric~~ coupons are substantially utilized as follows.

- (1) An electronic ticket or an electronic coupon is stored in an IC card (or a portable telephone with a built-in IC chip, or the like).
- (2) A user takes the IC card to a concert hall or a store.
- (3) Contents of the IC card are read out by an information reader disposed ^{at} ~~off~~ an admission gate of the concert hall or the store, and then ^{the} ~~contents~~ of the electronic ticket or the electronic coupon ^{is} ~~are~~ confirmed.
- (4) This permits admission into the concert hall, discount sale of merchandise, or the like.

Thus, there is no need to use a ^{printed paper} ~~ticket or a coupon which is printed on a~~ ^{the} ~~paper~~, thereby saving ^{of} ~~troublesome procedures~~ for issuing and mailing tickets or coupons, ~~to a large extent.~~

However, the conventional method of utilizing ^{an} the electronic ticket or coupon has ^{the} problem that information is not sufficiently utilized. For instance, since most of IC cards have stored therein their owner's names or the like, when the information reader reads the contents of the IC card, information indicating who ^{is} enters a concert hall, ^{ing} where ^{the location of} the concert hall ^{is}, and ^{the} what time ^{of entry} the user enters the hall will be generated. Although this information is ^{potentially} extremely useful for sales strategy and marketing of a ~~company or the like~~, it is not actually used at all in the prior art method. This problem ^{is also present} will be ⁱⁿ raised in use of the electronic coupon ^{the} in the same way.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION
Accordingly, it is an object of the invention to provide a system and computer program suitable for use in ^{development of by} information strategy of the company ^{utilizing} without wasting the foregoing information ^{which is otherwise wasted.}

DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

^{In one aspect,}

The present invention relates to a system, method, and computer program having the following aspects, for example.

- ^{comprising:} (1) A system for providing right information comprises memory means for storing a right information group composed of a plurality of ^{items} pieces of right information which are provided to a user, and right information managing means that includes ^{customer} said memory means, ^{a customer management means for managing information about} wherein said right information managing means accepts customer ^{receives the} information from ^{customer} customer management means for managing information about a customer, performs a ^{searches to locate,} searching process for predetermined right ^{rights information related to the predicted action} information from said right information group based on information included ^{the related} in the customer information, and provides said right information searched for ^{the information} to right receiving means for causing the user to receive a right.
- (2) The store visit information includes ^{may} user ^{identification} specifying information for ^{the prediction}

² (3) Right information receiving means for notifying a user of ^{right.}

identifying
~~specifying~~ a user visiting a store, and ~~said~~ ^{the} right information is provided to the
~~user specified by said user specifying information.~~
identified the identification

Preferably, the
~~(3) Said memory means includes a contact address of the user, and~~

the
~~said right information managing means informs said contact address~~
the
that the right information has been provided.

In another preferred embodiment, the
~~(4) Said right receiving means is to be transmitted right information~~

is storage means for storing the right information before it is transmitted to
carrying means for carrying the right information *by the customer*.

the
~~(5) Said customer information includes used-right information that is used~~
may
by the user, *customer* and *with* *pertaining to rights*

No ~~said searching process is to search for the right information that is~~
locate
more usable than *the* said used-right information, ~~from said right information~~

~~group.~~

the
~~(6) The right information provided to said right receiving means is right~~
may relate to
~~information usable in the store used by the user.~~
where acquired

~~(7) The right information provided to said right receiving means is right~~
where acquired
~~information usable in a subsidiary of the store used by the user.~~

~~(8) Said customer information includes prediction element information for~~
~~predicting an action, and~~

~~said searching process is to search for the right information about the~~
~~action predicted based on said prediction element information, from said~~
~~right information group.~~

the related
Preferably, the
~~(9) Said right information managing means provides said right information~~
before
~~until a presupposed action for prediction, on which the predicted action is~~
based, is completed.

The
~~(10) Said customer information includes inducing element information for~~
may
inducing an action, and

the
wherein said searching process is ~~to search~~ *for the* right information
related to
about the action to be induced based on *the* said inducing ~~element~~ information,
within the
from said right information group,

No. 11 → (ii) Said right information managing means *may* provide *the* said right information *before*
~~with~~ a presupposed action for ~~inducement~~, on which the action to be induced
is based, is completed.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

according to present
Fig. 1 is a schematic ~~view~~ of an apparatus ~~to which the invention is~~
~~applied~~;

Fig. 2 is a diagram showing a membership file;

Fig. 3 is a diagram showing a folder management file;

Fig. 4 is a diagram showing a screen for confirming and downloading
the folder;

Fig. 5 is a diagram showing memory contents ~~of~~ an IC card;

Fig. 6 is a diagram showing store visit information;

Fig. 7 is a diagram showing a provided-right file;

Fig. 8 is a diagram showing ~~a transmission~~ *transmitted* right information;

a
Fig. 9 is a diagram showing a screen for confirming and downloading
the folder;

Fig. 10 is a diagram showing memory contents ~~of~~ an IC card;

Fig. 11 is a diagram showing store visit information;

Fig. 12 is a diagram showing a provided-right file;

Fig. 13 is a diagram showing store visit information;

Fig. 14 is a diagram showing a provided-right file;

Fig. 15 is a diagram showing store visit information;

Fig. 16 is a diagram showing a provided-right file;

Fig. 17 is a diagram showing store visit information;

Fig. 18 is a diagram showing a provided-right file;

Fig. 19 is a diagram showing store visit information; and

Fig. 20 is a diagram showing a provided-right file.

DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS

First Embodiment of the Invention

~~The~~^A first preferred embodiment of the invention will be explained with reference to the accompanying drawings. ^{wherein} Fig. 1 is a schematic diagram showing hardware required ^{for practice of} ~~to carry out the invention and its associated~~ ^{as including} ~~surroundings.~~ ^{present}

No. 1 → ~~Such hardware is composed of~~ a management server 1 (a server used by a company which manages right^S information), an in-store terminal 2 (a computer disposed in a store, an event hall, or the like), a receiving server 3 (a server for receiving the right^S information), and a PC 4 (a computer owned by a user).

The management server 1, the in-store terminal 2, the receiving server 3, and the PC 4 are connected to one another via Internet 5 (communicating means) so as to transmit and receive data therebetween.

The management server 1, the in-store terminal 2, the receiving server 3, and the PC 4 each have^{, built-in,} a memory for storing data, a data transmitter for transmitting data, and a data receiver for receiving data ~~built-in,~~ and transmit and receive data using them.

Each memory has a computer program required to carry out the invention and predetermined data stored therein. Each foregoing device^{of the} is given a command based on ^{its associated} ~~this~~ computer program to process ~~corresponding~~ data, ⁱⁿ ~~thereby~~ carrying out the invention.

for reading and writing

The in-store terminal 2 has a built-in reader/writer for reading and writing data stored in the IC card.

The PC 4 includes a display monitor 11 for displaying data, a keyboard for data input 12, a mouse 13, and a reader/writer 14 for reading and writing data from and in the IC card. Into the reader/writer 14, the IC card 15 may be inserted, so that the data is read and written.

~~It should be noted that~~ the management server 1 functions as right^s information managing means, the in-store terminal 2 as customer managing means, the receiving server 3 as right^s receiving means, the IC card 15 as carrying means, the memory built into the managing server 1 as memory means, and the memory built into the receiving server 3 as yet-to-be-transmitted right^s information storage means.

~~Now, the outline of the present invention will be explained hereinafter.~~ ^{present} The invention ~~is to~~ ^{an} provide the electronic ticket and/or ~~the~~ electronic coupon, or the like for customers who visit stores selling merchandise or event halls, thereby attracting a large^s base of customers, improving the ^{drawing} ~~pulling~~ ^{an} power of the event hall, ~~and~~ ^{an} promoting the sales of merchandise, or the like.

~~Then, a condition (precondition) which is required to explain the preferred embodiment will be described below.~~

^{suppose, for example,} Mr. Kazuo Mita, who lives in Tokyo, is a member of service ^a including ^{for various} provision of electronic tickets and coupons, ~~which are provided by a company~~ called Dream Company. The Dream Company deals in admission tickets of events, coupons of various stores, or the like, and recently handles electronic tickets or coupons. ^{An} The electronic ticket or coupon is constituted by digitizing ^{ed} version of the contents of the admission ticket or the coupon, ^{which} ~~this~~ is stored and carried in a portable telephone or the like with an IC card or IC chip built-in, ^{In this manner} ~~which~~

the present invention
provides a system *by* which a user carrying the ticket or coupon can enter *the* event hall or use the coupon. Mr. Mita ~~who is a member~~ owns an IC card 15 (see Fig.1) for storing electronic tickets and/or electronic coupons.

The management server 1, managed by the Dream Company, stores therein a membership file (see Fig.2) composed of a plurality of membership records. *The stored* ~~As Mita's~~ *for Mr. Mita includes* "Membership Number: M356/ Member Name: Kazuo Mita/ Address: 〇-〇-〇 Akasaka Minato-ku Tokyo/ Telephone Number: 03-3582-XXXX/ Mail Address: 〇〇〇@ΔΔΔ.com/ Folder Number: F123/..." is stored. "Folder Number: F123" is a number *for* to manage the electronic ticket and coupon owned by Mr. Mita. For example, when Mr. Mita owns the electronic coupon "Pastry Shop 〇〇 200 yen off (7788-1)" and the electronic ticket "ΔΔ Stadium, pro baseball 〇〇 vs. xx unreserved bleacher seat admission ticket (0025-701)", "Folder Number: F123" is related (linked) to "Pastry Shop 〇〇 200 yen off (7788-1)" and "ΔΔ Stadium, pro baseball 〇〇 vs. xx unreserved bleacher seat admission ticket (0025-701)", which are stored in a folder management file stored in the receiving server 3 (see Fig. 3). When Mr. Mita uses the PC 4 to confirm ~~contents of his/her own~~ *owned* right, the display monitor 11 of the PC 4 displays the right ~~contents~~ *the* in ~~such a~~ *shown* manner ~~as that disclosed in Fig. 4, i.e., such that~~ *with* the ticket or coupon *is* included in the folder F123. Thus, ~~contents of~~ *owned* ticket or the like are displayed in a folder format, thereby making it possible for a user (Mr. Mita) to easily confirm the contents.

Execution of the method
Now, a ~~processing procedure~~ according to the present invention will *as* ~~be explained hereinafter.~~ *so* The invention is carried out ~~in the following~~ *as* ~~procedure.~~ <Transmission of Customer Information: STEP 1> → <Right Information Search and Transmission: STEP 2> → <Right Information Downloading: STEP 3>. These steps will be described below.

individually

Transmission of Customer Information: STEP 1

For example,

Mr. Mita enters a hamburger shop named "oo Burger" to have lunch.

In this oo Burger shop, an in-store terminal 2 (see Fig. 1) is disposed. When

he inserts ^{his} an IC card into an IC card ^{slot} inlet of a reader/writer ^{an} for the IC card

~~which is disposed in~~ the in-store terminal 2, an electronic coupon ^{of} that will be

usable the next time he comes to the shop, is ^{entered} transmitted into Mr. Mita's

folder. It should be noted that Mr. Mita's IC card 15 pre-stores therein

information ~~including contents such as those~~ ^{as} shown in Fig. 5. When Mr. Mita

^{decides} is going to purchase a hamburger, he passes the IC card 15 to a clerk. Then,

the clerk inserts the IC card 15 into the IC card ^{receiver} inlet. ~~Thus,~~ the in-store

^{then the} terminal 2 reads ~~out~~ contents stored in the IC card 15. Based on the ~~contents~~

^{information} read, the in-store terminal ^{compiles the} makes store visit information shown in Fig. 6, for

example, "Membership Number: M356/ Member Name: Kazuo Mita/ Store

Number: 9715/ Store Name: oo Burger/ Date and Time of Entering Store:

December 5, 2001, p.m. 3:00/ Used Right: None". It transmits or sends this

store visit information to the management server 1. The server 1 receives ^{and stores} the

^{thus transmits} information, ~~and then stores it in~~ ^{within} Among this information, "Membership

Number: M356/ Member Name: Kazuo Mita" are the contents that have been

read from the IC card 15, and "Date and Time of Entering Store" is the

information that has been read from a clock or the like built into the in-store

terminal 2. The other information ~~is one that~~ has been pre-stored in the

in-store terminal 2. It should be noted that, in the preferred embodiment, the

membership number functions as user specifying information, and the store

number as store specifying information. ~~The used right will be described~~

~~later.~~

Right Information Search and Transmission: STEP 2

In the management server ^{stores} a provided-right file such as that shown

in Fig. 7. ^{is stored} This provided-right file is composed of a plurality of provided-right records, each of which relates (links) ^{an} electronic coupon or ticket provided by ^a each store (or ~~each~~ event hall) to the store number and the store name. ✓✓✓

The management server 1 searches for or retrieves (carries out search processing) a provided-right file by designating the store visit information, namely, "Store Number: 9715" as a retrieval key. Accordingly, the provided -right record "Store Number: 9715/ Store Name: ○○ Burger/ Right To be Provided (Ticket Number): 200 yen off coupon of ○○ Burger (9715-1)" is retrieved ^{found and} ~~or found~~ as shown in Fig. 7, thereby specifying a right to be provided. It should be noted that "200 yen off coupon (9715-1)" included in this provided-right records ^{is an example of} functions as right information, and the provided-right file including ^{is a} the plurality of ^{items} ~~pieces~~ of right information as a right ~~information~~ group. ✓

Then, the management server 1 searches through membership file ^{by} designating the store visit information, namely, "Membership Number: M356" as a retrieval key. Thus, Mr. Mita's membership record such as that shown in Fig. 2 is found, so that the management server 1 specifies Mr. Mita's "Folder Number: F123" and "Mail Address: ○○○@△△△.com". ✓

Next, the management server 1 ~~makes or~~ generates transmission right ³ information, namely, "Membership Number: M356/ Member Name: Kazuo Mita/ Folder of Provision Destination: F123/ Provided Right: 200 yen off coupon of ○○ Burger (9715-1)", as shown in Fig. 8, based on the retrieved membership record, and the provided-right record, or the like, and then transmits it to the receiving server 3. ^{which} ~~This receiving server 3~~ stores this right information in its memory. ✓

At the same time, the management server 1 sends a message, ~~that,~~ ✓

e.g., "A new electronic ticket or coupon has been ^{added} ~~provided~~ to your folder", to Mr. Mita's e-mail address "ooo@AAA.com". It is noted that in the ⁵ embodiment, the e-mail address functions as a contact address. ✓

~~Mr.~~ The receiving server 3, as described above, ~~is~~ ⁵ stored a folder management file such as that shown in Fig. 3. Such a folder management file is composed of a plurality of folder management records, each of which relates (links) the folder number to an owned right. ✓

The receiving server 3 searches through the folder management file by designating the transmission right information "Folder of Provision Destination: F123" as a retrieval key. Thus, the folder management record "Folder Number: F123/ Pastry Shop oo 200 yen off (7788-1), AA Stadium, pro baseball oo vs. xx unreserved bleacher seat admission ticket (0025-701)" is ^{located and retrieved} ~~found out~~ as shown in Fig. 3. Then, the receiving server 3 adds the record "200 yen off coupon of oo Burger (9715-1)" (which is an electronic coupon included in the transmission right information shown in Fig. 8) to the folder management record (see Fig. 3). That is, "200 yen off coupon of oo Burger (9715-1)" is related (linked) to "Folder Number: F123" to be stored. As a result, Mr. Mita's folder management record ^{now includes} ~~has~~ the contents of "Folder Number: F123/ Pastry Shop oo 200 yen off (7788-1), AA Stadium, pro baseball oo vs. xx unreserved bleacher seat admission ticket (0025-701), 200 yen off coupon of oo Burger (9715-1) ~~(not shown)~~". ✓

Right Information Downloading: STEP 3 ✓

⁵ Suppose
Mr. Mita returns home at night after having lunch at the oo Burger, and receives an e-mail using the PC 4. The received mail from the management server .1 includes a message that "A new electronic ticket or coupon has been provided". Mr. Mita gains access to a web page operated by the Dream Company so as to confirm and download the provided electronic ✓

ticket and/or coupon. After the information "Folder Number: F123" or a predetermined password is inputted and sent, the contents such as ~~these~~ shown in Fig. 9 will be displayed on a display screen 11 of the PC 4.

Because Mr. Mita is going to have a meal at the ○○ Burger next week, he ~~clicks~~ ^{touches} a "download" ^{window} part which is located next to the "200 yen off coupon of ○○ Burger (9715-1)" ^{window} part. Thus, the PC 4 ~~makes~~ ^{transmits a} downloading request ^{for} information indicating "Ticket Number of Interest: 9715-1" ^(not shown) and ~~transmits it~~ ^{responsive to receipt of the request} to the receiving server 3. The server 3 ~~receiving it~~ ^{for} sends an electronic coupon ^{of} "200 yen off coupon of ○○ Burger (9715-1)" to the PC 4, while ~~cancels~~ ⁱⁿ the transmitted ticket from the folder management record. The PC 4 receiving the electronic coupon stores the received electronic coupon in the IC card 15 via the reader/writer 14 for the IC card. Accordingly, downloading of right ^{with} information is completed, ^{so that} the IC card 15 ^{has} stored therein the resultant contents ^{shown} such as ~~these~~ in Fig. 10.

After some days, Mr. Mita goes to the ○○ Burger, and passes the IC card 15 to a clerk or cashier in paying. When the clerk inserts the IC card 15 into the in-store terminal 2, the in-store terminal 2 reads ~~out the contents of~~ the electronic coupon, and then subtracts 200 yen from the total price, while canceling the electronic coupon "200 yen off coupon of ○○ Burger (9715-1)" stored in the IC card 15. This allows Mr. Mita to get ^a discount of 200 yen off at the ○○ Burger.

The provision of the electronic coupon to the visiting customer (Mr. Mita) encourages the customer to visit the store (○○ Burger) again, leading to increased sales ^{for} of the ○○ Burger. ^{and} That is, this enables attracting a large base of customers.

Second Embodiment of the Invention

~~Although~~ ^{Whereas} in the foregoing first embodiment, ~~a case where the~~ ^{provision of an}

For use a
electronic coupon ~~usable in the store is provided~~ has been described, a case where an admission ticket (electronic ticket) for a movie, a concert, or the like is provided ~~will be explained in this embodiment~~. It should be noted that the present embodiment is similar to the first embodiment in most part, ~~thereof~~. That is, ~~different points~~ *differences* between this embodiment and the first embodiment are *in* the contents of store visit information, and the contents of *the* provided-right file. The ~~other~~ *features* remaining part of the present embodiment ~~is~~ *are* substantially the same as ~~that~~ *those* of the first embodiment. ~~Now, the only~~ *The features that* ~~are~~ *are* different points will be described hereinafter.

First, the contents of store visit information will be explained. The visit information in this embodiment ~~has the following contents:~~ *might have, by way of example the*

"Membership Number: M356/ Member Name: Kazuo Mita/ Store Number: 5114/ Store Name: ○○ Cinema/ Date and Time of Entering Store: December 5, 2001, p.m. 3:00/ Used Right: None" as shown in Fig. 11. That is, when Mr. Mita ~~is going~~ *goes* to watch a movie at the ○○ Cinema, the in-store terminal 2 disposed at an entrance gate of the cinema reads out the contents of the IC card 15, and ~~makes the~~ *generates* store visit information based on the read contents.

Now, the contents of the provided-right file will be explained. The provided-right file has the following contents: "Store Number: 5114/ Store Name: ○○ Cinema/ Right To be Provided (Ticket Number): Movie entitled "Summer in Florida", Admission Ticket (5114-1)" as shown in Fig. 12. That is, the right to be provided for Mr. Mita is an admission ticket for the movie entitled "Summer in Florida", which will be screened at the ○○ Cinema next month.

This electronic ticket is ~~subjected to the same processing as that in~~ *ed in/ manner as in* the first embodiment, ~~to be~~ sent to the receiving server 3, and then downloaded (stored) into ~~the~~ *Mr.* Mita's IC card 15. This enables Mr. Mita to

watch the "Summer in Florida" movie which will be screened at the ○○ Cinema next month, at a low price or at no charge. Thus, the present invention can handle not only coupons for stores selling merchandise, but also admission tickets for watching a movie, a concert, a sport, ^{event} or the like. In short, the term "store" ^{as used herein includes} ~~of the invention implies any~~ providing places in a broad sense, such as ^s a store selling merchandise, ^s a store giving service, a hall where an event is held, and the like.

^{Third Embodiment of the Invention}
~~In~~ ^{A third embodiment of} ~~the present embodiment~~ ^{illustrates the} case where Mr. Mita brings the electronic coupon, which ^{was} ~~is provided in the case of~~ the first embodiment, to the ○○ Burger again, ~~will be explained~~. The present embodiment is similar to the first embodiment in most part, ^{Differences} thereof. That is, ~~different points~~ between this embodiment and the first embodiment are ⁱⁿ the contents of store visit information, ⁱⁿ the contents of a provided-right file, and ⁱⁿ the ~~contents of~~ searching ~~process~~ ^{features} performed by the management server 1. The other ~~remaining part~~ ^{are} of the present embodiment ^{those} is substantially the same as that of the first embodiment. ~~Now, the only different points~~ ^{the features which are} will be described hereinafter.

First, the contents ^{the} of store visit information will be explained. The store visit information in this embodiment has the following contents: "Membership Number: M356/ Member Name: Kazuo Mita/ Store Number: 9715/ Store Name: ○○ Burger/ Date and Time of Entering Store: December 5, 2001, p.m. 3:00/ Used Right: 9715-1" as shown in Fig. 13. The different ^{ce} point between this embodiment and the first embodiment is that "Used Right" in the first embodiment is "none", ^{while} ~~but~~ ^{it is} in this embodiment "9715-1". The used ^{it is} Right means the electronic coupon (or electronic ticket) that has been used by Mr. Mita at the ○○ Burger. That is, the in-store terminal 2 of the ○○ Burger

reads the electronic coupon from the IC card 15 ^{containing} storing the contents ~~such as~~ ^{generating} ~~these~~ as shown in Fig. 10, and adds it when making store visit information. It should be noted that in the present embodiment, the used right ^{"R" represents} functions ~~as~~ used-right information."

Next, the contents of the provided-right file will be explained. The provided-right file has the following contents: "Store Number: 9715/ Store Name: oo Burger/ Right To be Provided (Ticket Number): 200 yen off coupon of oo Burger (9715-1), 500 yen off coupon of oo Burger (9715-2), 700 yen off coupon of oo Burger (9715-3)", as shown in Fig. 14. The difference ^{ce between this} point from ~~embodiment 2nd~~ ^{in this embodiment} the first embodiment is that a plurality of (three) rights are ~~to be~~ provided, which are stored in order of increasing value to a customer. In this embodiment, "500 yen off coupon of oo Burger (9715-2)", and "700 yen off coupon of oo Burger (9715-3)" ^{are} ~~serve as~~ more valuable right ^s information than the used right.

Now, the searching ~~process~~ performed by the management server 1 will be explained below. This process is substantially the same as that of the first embodiment, but different ^{as follows.} therefrom ~~in the following point.~~

No # → The used right of the store visit information is "9715-1". Thus, the management server 1 searches for a ticket corresponding to "9715-2", which is obtained by adding "1" to the foregoing "9715-1", and sets this ticket as a provided right of the transmission right information. That is, the management server 1 ^{generates} ~~makes~~ the transmission right information "Membership Number: M356/ Member Name: Kazuo Mita/ Folder of Provision Destination: F123/ Provided Right: 500 yen off coupon of oo Burger (9715-2)" (not shown), and transmits it to the receiving server 3. This coupon is ^{processed as in} ~~subjected to the same processing as that of~~ the first embodiment, to be downloaded into ^{Mr.} ~~the~~ Mita's IC card 15.

~~Providing again~~ ^{The} a customer ^{is then provided} with the ^{an} electronic coupon that is more valuable than the used coupon ^{thereby} enhances the possibility that the customer ^{will} visit the store again, ~~and thereby~~ ^{and} permit attracting a larger base of customers.

Fourth Embodiment of the Invention

~~Although~~ ^{While} in the first embodiment, ~~the~~ ^{an} electronic coupon usable at the ○○ Burger is provided to the customer who has visited the ○○ Burger, ~~in this fourth embodiment~~ ^{in this fourth embodiment} case where an electronic coupon usable at a subsidiary of the ○○ Burger is issued, ~~provided will be explained in this embodiment.~~ The present embodiment is similar to the first embodiment in most ^{respects.} ~~part thereof.~~ ^{The differences} That is, ~~different points~~ between this embodiment and the first embodiment are ⁱⁿ the contents of store visit information, the contents of a provided-right file, and the ~~contents of~~ searching process performed by the management server 1. The other ^{features} ~~remaining part~~ of the present embodiment ^{are} is substantially the same as ~~that~~ ^{those} of the first embodiment. ^{Accordingly,} ~~Now, the only different points~~ ^{which are} will be described hereinafter.

First, the contents of the store visit information will be explained. The store visit information in this embodiment has the following contents: "Membership Number: M356/ Member Name: Kazuo Mita/ Store Number: 9715/ Store Name: ○○ Burger/ Date and Time of Entering Store: December 5, 2001, p.m. 3:00/ Used Right: None" as shown in Fig. 15. This information is ~~completely~~ the same as that of the first embodiment.

Next, the contents of the provided-right file will be explained. The provided-right file has the following contents: "Store Number: 9715/ Store Name: ○○ Burger/ Right To be Provided (Ticket Number): 100 yen off coupon of Coffee Shop ΔΔ (9715-101)", as shown in Fig. 16. ^{Thus, this fourth embodiment differs} The ~~different point~~ from the first embodiment ^{is} that the right to be provided is not ~~the~~ ^{an} electronic

coupon usable at the ○○ Burger, but ^{rather, an} the electronic coupon usable at the Coffee Shop ΔΔ (which is a subsidiary of the ○○ Burger). It should be noted that in the present embodiment, "100 yen off coupon of Coffee Shop ΔΔ (9715-101)" ^{is an example of} ~~functions as~~ the "right information usable in its subsidiary store".

~~If~~ ^{Based} on this store visit information, the same searching process as that of the first embodiment ^{is executed and} ~~and the other processing are carried out~~, Mr. Mita obtains ^{a reading} the coupon, ~~namely~~, "100 yen off coupon of Coffee Shop ΔΔ (9715-101)", ^{leading to} ~~leading to~~ enhanced possibility that Mr. Mita ^{will} ~~visits~~ the Coffee Shop ΔΔ. This succeeds in attracting a large base of customers to the subsidiary (one of group companies).

It should be noted that the "store" of the "subsidiary store" ^{terminology} ~~implies~~ ^{is used} ~~any providing places~~ in a broad sense, for example, not only stores selling merchandise and ~~giving~~ service, but also halls or the like where events are held, as described above.

Fifth Embodiment of the Invention

In the ~~present~~ ^{Fifth} embodiment, ~~a case where~~ a customer's action is predicted based on customer information, and then an electronic coupon or the like ^{ing} to conform to the predicted action is provided, ~~will be explained~~. The ^{Fifth} ~~present~~ embodiment is similar to the first embodiment in most ^{respects} ~~part thereof~~. ^{Differences} ~~That is, different points~~ between this ^{Fifth} embodiment and the first embodiment are the contents ⁱⁿ of store visit information, the contents ⁱⁿ of a provided-right file, the contents ⁱⁿ of searching process performed by the management server 1, and the contents ^{in the process for} of transmission ^{of} right information. ^{aspects} ~~The other remaining part~~ of the ^{Fifth} present embodiment is substantially the same as ^{those} ~~that~~ of the first embodiment. ^{Accordingly,} ~~Now, the only different points~~ ^{are} will be described hereinafter. In the case of ^{this Fifth} ~~the present~~ embodiment, downloading of

the electronic coupon or the like is not performed by the PC 4, but ^{is} ~~should be~~ preferably performed by a portable compact computer, or a portable telephone with a built-in IC chip.

^{Included within} First, ^{the} ~~the contents of the customer information will be explained.~~ The ^{5:5th} ~~store visit information in this embodiment has the following contents:~~ ^{includes:} "Membership Number: M356/ Member Name: Kazuo Mita/ Store Number: 5114/ Store Name: ○○ Cinema/ Date and Time of Entering Store: December 5, 2001, p.m. 5:00/ Used Right: None", as shown in Fig. 17. This customer information is the same as that of the first embodiment. In the present embodiment, the date and time when the customer enters the store is the most important information. ^{2nd} ~~It should be noted that in the embodiment, the date and time of the customer's entering the store serves as~~ ^{the} ~~prediction element~~ information."

Next, the contents of the provided-right file will be explained. The provided-right file has the following contents: "Store Number: 5114/ Store Name: ○○ Cinema/ Customer's Entering Time: p.m. 3:00-6:00/ Predicted Action: having dinner/ Action-Completion Prediction: in 90 minutes after entering/ Right To be Provided (Ticket Number): Free Coupon of Dessert at Restaurant ○○ (5114-101)", as shown in Fig. 18. ^{differences} The ~~different points~~ from the first embodiment are ^{the} ~~that there are~~ additionally provided ^{of} ~~data items~~ including the entering time, the predicted action, and the action-completion prediction, and that the ^{nature} ~~contents~~ of the right to be provided ^{is} ~~are set~~ based on the prediction "a customer who enters the cinema at p.m. 3:00 to p.m. 6:00 will have dinner after watching a movie". In ^{this} ~~the~~ preferred embodiment, ^{the} ~~as a~~ right to be provided is ~~set~~ an electronic coupon usable at the Restaurant ○○ ^{for} ~~which is suitable for the dinner, e.g., "Free Coupon of Dessert at Restaurant~~ ○○ (5114-101)". In ^{this 5:5th} ~~the~~ embodiment, this ^{for} ~~"Free Coupon of Dessert at~~

exemplified by what is referred to herein

Restaurant 00 (5114-101)" coupon functions as "right information ^{related to} about the predicted action". Further, in the embodiment, "a presupposed action ^{is exemplified by} for prediction" corresponds to "an action of watching a movie", and "until the ^{before} presupposed action for prediction is completed" corresponds to "by December 5, 2001, p.m. 6:30 ^{is exemplified} which time is obtained by adding action-completion prediction time (90 minutes after entering) to December 5, 2001, p.m. 5:00".
Of course,
(Note that the invention is not limited to this case.)

~~Now,~~ The searching process performed by the management server 1 ~~will be explained below. This process is substantially the same as that of the first embodiment, but different therefrom in the following point.~~

~~The entering time in the customer information is "December 5, 2001, p.m. 5:00". Thus, the management server 1 searches for a provided-right record of interest from the provided-right file by designating "Store Number: 5114" and "Entering Time: p.m. 5:00" as retrieval keys. As a result, the provided-right record such as that shown in Fig. 18 is ^{located} found out, and based on this record, transmission right information is ^{generated} made.~~

~~Now,~~ transmission processing of the transmission right ^{for transmission} information to the receiving server 3, ^{which} ~~which processing is performed by the management server 1, will be explained below. This transmission process is substantially the same as that of the first embodiment, but different therefrom in the following point.~~

~~In the present embodiment,~~ a customer's next action is predicted, and then an electronic coupon or the like, ^{is} ~~to~~ conform to the predicted action, is provided. Therefore, if the electronic coupon to be provided does not reach a customer until the customer (Mr. Mita) leaves ^{the} ~~a cinema or a~~ movie theater (that is, until the presupposed action ^{after} ~~for prediction~~ is completed), it is meaningless. The timing of transmission is very important to transmission.

of the transmission right information ^{is very important in} according to the present embodiment.

~~Hereinafter, the processing will be explained.~~

The entering time in the customer information ^{is} corresponds to "December 5, 2001, p.m. 5:00", and the time when Mr. Mita will leave the cinema ^{is} corresponds to "action-completion prediction: in 90 minutes after entering" (at earliest 90 minutes). Thus, the management server 1 calculates the transmission timing to obtain the result "from p.m. 5:00 to p.m. 6:30". During this time, the server 1 transmits the transmission right information to the receiving server 3. Accordingly, when Mr. Mita finishes watching the movie, the information "Free Coupon ^{for} of Dessert at Restaurant ○○ (5114-101)" has been transmitted to ^{Mr.} the Mita's folder. Therefore, when Mr. Mita, who is ~~just~~ hungry after the movie, checks e-mails on his portable telephone or the like, a message that a new coupon has been ^{included in that} provided is ~~sent to the~~ e-mail, thereby enhancing the possibility that Mr. Mita ^{will} visits the Restaurant ○○. This enables provision of ^{an} the electronic coupon or the like that conforms to a customer's action, resulting in ^{an} increased ⁱⁿ opportunities for the customer to use the electronic coupons ~~and so on.~~

It should be noted that prediction of ^{an} ~~a next~~ action may be ~~carried out~~ based on the user's sex, age bracket, the number of companions, or the like.

2 Sixth Embodiment of the Invention

In the foregoing fifth embodiment, a customer's action is predicted, and ^{an} the electronic coupon or the like ^{to} conform ^{ing} to the predicted action, is ^{issued} provided. On the other hand, ^{this sixth} in the present embodiment, ^{issues} a case where an electronic coupon or the like to induce a customer's action ~~is provided will be explained.~~ The present embodiment is similar to the first embodiment in ^{respects.} ~~most part thereof.~~ ^{Differences} That is, ^{sixth} different points between this embodiment and the first embodiment are ⁱⁿ the contents of store visit information, ⁱⁿ the contents of a

provided-right file, and the ⁱⁿ contents of searching process performed by the management server 1. The other ^{features} remaining part of the present embodiment ^{this sixth} are ^{those} substantially the same as ^{that} of the first embodiment. Now, ^{the} only ^{features} different ^{points} will be described hereinafter.

First, ^{Within} the contents of the customer information ^{the} will be explained. The store visit information in this ^{sixth} embodiment has the following contents: "Membership Number: M356/ Member Name: Kazuo Mita/ Store Number: 6555/ Store Name: Pub ○○/ Type: drinking/Date and Time of Entering Store: December 5, 2001, p.m. 7:00/ Used Right: None", as shown in Fig. 19. This customer information differs from that of the first embodiment in that ^{it additionally} there ^{includes the} is provided an item "Type: drinking", ^{an example of what is referred} In this embodiment, this item "Type: drinking" ^{to herein} functions as inducing element information."

~~Next, the contents of the provided-right file will be explained. The~~ ^{of this sixth embodiment} provided-right file has the following contents: "Store Number: 6555/ Store Name: Pub ○○/ Type: drinking/ Action To be Induced: inducing the customer to go to Beef Bowl (which is called "Gyudon" in Japanese) Restaurant ○○/ Action-Completion Prediction: in 60 minutes after entering/ Right To be Provided(Ticket Number): 100 yen off coupon of Beef Bowl Restaurant ○○ (5114-201)". ^{features} The different ^{points} from the first embodiment are that there are additionally provided data items including the type, the action to be induced, and the action-completion prediction, and that the contents of the provided right ^{is} are ^{set} based on the ^{following} object ^{ive} of inducement: "although most people want to eat Chinese noodles after drinking alcohol, a coupon induces them to go to the Beef Bowl Restaurant". It should be noted that in the present embodiment, "100 yen off coupon of Beef Bowl Restaurant ○○ (5114-201)" ^{serves} functions as "right information ^{related to} about the action to be induced". Further, in ^{this sixth} the embodiment, "presupposed action ^{induced} for inducement"

^{is exemplified by}
~~corresponds to~~ "action of drinking and eating at the pub", and ^{before} ~~"until the~~
^{induced} ~~presupposed action for inducement is completed"~~ ^{is exemplified} ~~corresponds to~~ "by
December 5, 2001, p.m. 8:00," which time is obtained by adding 20
action-completion prediction time (60 minutes after entering) to December 5,
2001, p.m. 7:00. ~~(Note that the invention is not limited to this case.)~~

~~Now,~~ ^{executed} The searching process ~~performed~~ by the management server 1
~~will be explained below.~~ This searching process is substantially the same as
that of the first embodiment, but ^{that} ~~different~~ therefrom in the ~~following point.~~

~~The~~ ^{type of} customer information (action type) is "drinking".
Thus, the management server 1 searches for a provided-right record of
interest from the provided-right file by designating "Store Number: 6555"
and "Type: drinking" as retrieval keys. As a result, ^a ~~the~~ provided-right record
such as that shown in Fig. 20 is ^{located} ~~found out.~~

~~The~~ ^{Now,} ~~transmission processing~~ of the transmission right information
to the receiving server 3, which ~~processing~~ is performed by the management
server 1, ~~will be explained below.~~ This ~~transmission process~~ is substantially
the same as that of the first embodiment, but different therefrom in the
following point.

^{this sixth} In the present embodiment, ^{the} a customer's action is induced, and an
^{is designed to induce a customer to act in}
^{a desired manner} electronic coupon or the like ~~that conforms to the action to be induced is~~
^{provided.} Therefore, if the electronic coupon to be provided does not reach a
^{after} customer until the customer (Mr. Mita) leaves the pub (that is, ^{after} ~~until~~ the
presupposed action ~~for inducement~~ is completed), it is meaningless. The
timing of ~~transmission is very important to transmission~~ of the transmission
^{is very important in} right information ~~according to~~ the present embodiment. ~~Hereinafter, the~~
~~processing will be explained.~~

^{entry} The entering date and time in the customer information ~~corresponds~~ ^{is exemplified by}

~~At~~ "December 5, 2001, p.m. 7:00", and the time when the customer will leave
~~the pub corresponds to~~ ^{is exemplified by} "action-start prediction: in 60 minutes after entering"
(at earliest 60 minutes). Thus, the management server 1 calculates the
transmission timing to obtain the result "from p.m. 7:00 to p.m. 8:00".
During this time, the server 1 transmits the transmission right information
to the receiving server 3. Accordingly, when Mr. Mita leaves the pub, the
information "100 yen off coupon of Beef Bowl Restaurant ○○ (5114-201)" has
been transmitted to ~~the~~ ^{Mr.} Mita's folder. Therefore, when Mr. Mita, who wants
to eat Chinese noodles after leaving the Pub ○○, looks at his portable
telephone, ^{he sees} an e-mail saying "An electronic coupon has been transmitted to
your folder," ~~reaches in the same manner as the fifth embodiment.~~
Then, he downloads this new electronic coupon, ^{i.e.} ~~so that the~~ "100 yen off coupon of Beef
Bowl Restaurant ○○ (5114-201)." ~~coupon is sent to Mr. Mita.~~ ^{Thus,} (That is, this
coupon is stored in the IC chip of Mr. Mita's portable telephone, and its
contents are displayed on a display screen of the phone. [⚡] This enhances the
possibility of Mr. Mita's going to Beef Bowl Restaurant ○○, ^{rather than to} ~~not to~~ a Chinese
noodle restaurant, ~~thereby permitting inducement of the customer's action.~~
That is, ^{the} ~~a~~ utilization ^{of} rate of the electronic coupon or the like provided by the
Dream Company will be increased.

It should be noted that although in the foregoing ~~embodiments,~~
^{embodiments} specific ~~cases~~ have been explained, the invention is not limited thereto. For
example, the following ~~cases may be allowed.~~ ^{are contemplated.}

(1) Although ^{an} ~~the~~ electronic ticket for ^a ~~the~~ movie and ^{an} ~~the~~ electronic coupon
provided at a hamburger shop have been ^{used for illustration} ~~explained~~ in the foregoing
embodiments, the electronic ticket or coupon according to the present
invention may be ^{one} ~~usable~~ in any event halls, ⁱⁿ ~~any shops~~ selling various
merchandise or providing services, or the like.

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(2) Although ~~the~~ electronic ticket or electronic coupon is sent to the yet-to-be-transmitted right^S information storage means in the foregoing embodiments, the electronic ticket or electronic coupon may be directly sent to right^S carrying means (means for carrying right^S information: for example, a portable telephone or a compact computer with an IC chip built-in).

(3) The contents of data^{is} are not limited to ~~those of data explained~~ ^{that described} in the foregoing embodiments, ~~That is,~~ ^{as} any data will do as long as it has the same function.

(4) Hardware is not limited to ~~one as explained~~ ^{that described} in the foregoing embodiments, ~~That is,~~ ^{as} any hardware will do as long as it has the same function. For example, the processing performed by the management server 1 and the processing performed by the receiving server 3 may be handled by only one server.

(5) The contents~~/~~ and procedure of the processing are not limited to those ~~as~~ explained in the foregoing embodiments. That is, any processing contents~~/~~ and processing procedure will do as long as they have the same functions.

(6) ~~The~~ An expression "accept information (data)" means "receive information (data)". ~~Note that the expression "accept information (data)" is not limited~~ ^{but} ~~only to "receive information (data)".~~ ~~The~~ An expression "provide information (data)" means "transmit information (data)". ~~Note that the expression "provide information (data)" is not limited~~ ^{but} ~~only to "transmit information (data)".~~ ^{thereto.}

^{is intended to include}
(7) The term "customer" ~~implies~~ all customers or visitors ~~in any case~~ in a broad sense, for example, not only ~~in~~ the case of a customer ~~actually coming~~ ^{into} a store, but also ~~in~~ the case of the customer ~~entering~~ an event hall, inquiring of a store by a telephone, accessing a homepage, or the like.

(8) The data items of data ~~presented~~ presented in the foregoing embodiments

are basically related (linked) to one another to be stored in the memory.

(9) The term ^{technology} "yet-to-be-transmitted right^s information storage means for storing right^s information before it is transmitted to the carrying means". ^{has reference to} ~~implies~~ the memory for storing (memorizing) the electronic ticket or the electronic coupon before it is downloaded via Internet into the portable telephone or the like with the IC card or IC chip built-in, ~~which can carry the right information. Note that the invention is not limited to this case.~~

INDUSTRIAL APPLICABILITY

The present invention has the following effects.

- (1) The present invention provides customers visiting a store with electronic tickets or electronic coupons, thereby improving repeat customer rate (the probability of customer^s visiting the store again), and attracting a large base of customers.
- (2) Since the present invention provides electronic tickets or electronic coupons based on customer information, the electronic tickets or coupons provided conform ^{the} to customer's needs and actions. This ^{provides} ~~enables~~ effective ^{utilization of} ~~provision of~~ electronic tickets or coupons, so that information generated when the electronic ticket or coupon is ^{surrendered} ~~utilized~~ can be sufficiently utilized.
- (3) ^{ISSUANCE an} ~~Provision of the~~ electronic ticket or electronic coupon usable in a store ^{visited by} ~~where~~ a customer visits ^{tends} ~~leads~~ to increased repeat customer rate. Thus, each store ^{permits} ~~attracts~~ a large base of customers, ^{on} ~~newly~~ ^{useful} ~~usable~~ than the ^{previously} ~~used~~ electronic ticket or coupon (used right), resulting in increased repeat customer rate.
- (5) Provision of an electronic tickets or electronic coupons usable both in the store ^{visited by} ~~where~~ the customer visits and in its subsidiary ^{ies} ~~(one of group companies)~~

^s ^r ^{that of}
~~permits~~ attracting a large base of customers ~~into the~~ group companies.

(6) An action is predicted, and an electronic ticket or coupon that conforms to the predicted action is ^{issued} ~~provided~~, thereby enhancing ^{the} ~~the~~ utilization rate of the electronic ticket or coupon.

(7) ^{Issuance} ~~Provision~~ of an electronic ticket or coupon ^{to a particular} inducing a customer's action ^{by the customer} can improve the pulling power of a store in which the electronic ticket or coupon is usable.

(8) If the electronic ticket or coupon is not provided until a ^{predicted} (presupposed) action ^{induced} ~~for prediction~~ or a presupposed action ~~for inducement~~ is completed, provision of the electronic ticket or coupon is meaningless, because it cannot be used. In the present invention, the electronic ticket or coupon is provided ^{before} ~~until~~ a next action is started after customer information is received.

(9) ^{Issuance and} ~~The provision of the~~ electronic ticket or coupon is ^{notified to the} ~~informed a~~ customer by an e-mail or the like, so that the customer ^{may} ~~may~~ know that a new electronic ticket or the like ^{has been added} ~~is provided~~ to his/her own folder.

(10) Since, in the present invention, the electronic ticket or coupon is transmitted to yet-to-be-transmitted right information storage means ^{which in the form} ~~is called~~ ^{of a} customer's ~~folder, application~~ ^{invention} usage of the contents as disclosed in Japanese Patent Application No. 2001-037078, entitled "a system for transferring an electronic ticket, and a computer program for achieving same" can be further expanded.

ABSTRACT

Electronic tickets, electronic coupons, or the like are ~~provided~~ ^{issued} to customers who visit stores selling merchandise or event halls, thereby ~~enlarging the~~ ^{attracting a large base of customers,} improving the pulling power of the event hall, promoting the sales of merchandise, ~~or the like.~~ ^{etc.}

A system for providing right information ^{includes a management server with a} comprises memory means ~~for storing a plurality of electronic tickets or coupons, and a management server (1) that includes the memory means.~~

The managing server ^{ement receives} (1) ~~accepts~~ information on a customer from an in-store terminal (2), ^{es} ~~performs a searching process for a predetermined~~ electronic ticket or coupon based on the customer information, and ^{ISSUES} ~~provides~~ the electronic ticket or coupon ^{to the customer} searched for to a user.